

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

/060 W

----- 090809

P R 021646Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6079

INFO DIA WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ROME 3434

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS READY FOR THEIR 40TH PARTY CONGRESS

REF: ROME 15118

1. SOCIALIST (PSI) 40TH PARTY CONGRESS PROMISES NO SURPRISES ON THE EVE OF ITS CONVOCATION, MARCH 3. THE ONE QUESTION INVESTING AN AIR OF DRAMA TO ITS PREPARATION AS THE LAST YEAR ENDED -- WHETHER THE PSI WOULD DECIDE TO BRING DOWN THE MORO-LAMALFA GOVERNMENT -- WAS ANSWERED PREMATURELY.

2. CONGRESS WAS PROJECTED LAST OCTOBER AS A "UNITARY" CONGRESS WHEN THE UNITARY PLATFORM FOR IT WAS APPROVED BY THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE (SUMMARIZED REFTEL). IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE CONGRESS WILL MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN IT. ("UNITARY" AS IT IS WORKING OUT MEANS UNANIMITY IN TAKING ALL MAJOR DECISIONS, ACHIEVED THROUGH A PRIOR AGREEMENT AMONG THE MAJOR FACTION LEADERS, WHICH INCLUDES A DIVISION OF THE SEATS ON THE NEW PARTY ORGANS TO BE ELECTED.)

3. THE COMPLETED "DEBATE" AND SELECTION OF DELEGATES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL CONFIRM THAT THE UNITARY PROJECT IS SUCCEEDING.

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NO OPPOSING PLATFORMS WERE OFFERED (OR ALLOWED), AND MOST

DELEGATES WERE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF SINGLE CLOSED LISTS AGREED TO IN ADVANCE BY THE LOCAL FACTIONS. IN SOME AREAS THE PSI DID NOT EVEN BOTHER TO ORGANIZE SECTIONAL AND/OR PROVINCIAL MEETINGS AS REQUIRED. (THE FINAL CHOICE OF DELEGATES WAS MADE AT REGIONAL CONGRESSES.)

4. THE PERCENTAGES OF DELEGATES EACH FACTION IS SENDING TO THE CONGRESS DIFFER LITTLE FROM THOSE WHICH CAME OUT OF THE LAST (FIGURES IN PARENTHESIS ARE THOSE FROM THE 1972 CONGRESS): DEMARTINO 42.7 (45 PERCENT); NENNI 14 PERCENT (12 PERCENT); MANCINI 19.8 PERCENT (21 PERCENT); LOMBARDI 17.8 PERCENT (12 PERCENT); AND BERTOLDI 5.7 PERCENT (10 PERCENT).

5. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES, THOSE OF THE LOMBARDI AND BERTOLDI FACTIONS, REFLECT A STRENGTHENING OF FORMER PRIMARILY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE LATTER. THE BERTOLDI GROUP, HITHERTO ATTACHED TO DEMARTINO'S MAJORITY, RECENTLY ADOPTED PRACTICALLY THE SAME LINE AS LOMBARDI'S FAR LEFT WING, WHICH HAS CONSISTENTLY FOUGHT FOR THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT. IT ALSO LOST ONE OF ITS MAJOR EXPONENTS (ENRICO MANCA) TO DEMARTINO.

6. NO ONE DOUBTS THAT DEMARTINO WILL BE REELECTED SECRETARY OR MUCH THAT BETTINO CRAXI, ONE OF THE TWO CURRENT DEPUTY SECRETARIES, WILL EMERGE AS THE INFORMAL HEIR APPARENT. HOWEVER, THE FINAL NUMBER AND NAMES OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARIES WHICH WILL COME OUT OF THE CONGRESS IS ABOUT THE ONLY INTERESTING ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTION YET UNDECIDED. THERE IS TALK OF APPOINTING ONE FROM EACH FACTION AND GIVING EACH WELL-DEFINED RESPONSIBILITIES OVER THE PARTY ORGANIZATION.

7. REPORTS FROM CONSTITUENT POSTS CONFIRM THAT THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT, I.E., AN ALLIANCE WITH THE PCI, SOCIALIST "AUTONOMY," AND CRITICISM OF THE DC, ARE BY FAR THE MOST POPULAR THEMES WITH THE PSI'S RANK AND FILE, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG. BEAUDRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOCIALISM, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME03434
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760079-0446
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197603104/aaaadnkz.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ROME 15118
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <07 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOCIALISTS READY FOR THEIR 40TH PARTY CONGRESS
TAGS: PINT, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006